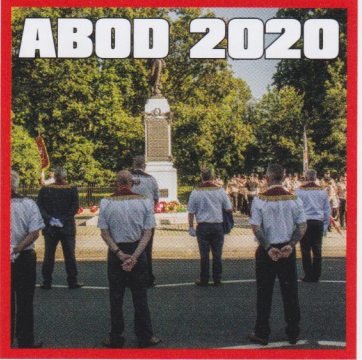


the **Loyalist**

8th Edition 2020

ABOD 2020



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Coronavirus COVID-19



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DON'T IGNORE THE GUIDELINES - STAY SAFE!

The voice of The Loyalist telling it like it is

This is the time of year when many parents are excited about, as they feel the relief of, sending their children back to school which for many means a lot of peace and quiet at home but as some sense of normality returns to homes all over the UK in the educational sense for many people still on the government furlough scheme uncertainty and financial concerns are rife. The effects of Covid on household finances might not fully kick in for months yet but in the longer term a lot more uncertainty exists, and we just won't know the long term effects on both adults and children. Reports have indicated a high rise in domestic violence and some newspapers have said varying forms of PTSD will be felt by school children as they suffer from the lack of socialising and schooling but we just have to do all we can to get on with life and monitor the transmission rates to make sure we don't put any lives in danger by our actions. The Government Eat out to Help out scheme was a fantastic initiative and surely gave the local economy a mighty boost with an estimated 10.5 Million purchases being carried out in the first week alone. Yet as we approach the end of the Furlough scheme in October already employers are feeling the pinch as they have to start making contributions to their employees whilst having next to no income. Rumours of a second wave and possible further lockdown in Autumn will also add to stress levels but life has to go on and here's hoping the country can go back to some form of normal.

Politically the division between the varying power sharing parties is still there to see and we have also had visits by both the newly appointed Taoiseach Micheal Martin and Prime Minister Boris Johnson to try and set some Unionist minds at rest. Martin to try and pretend he is reaching out the hand of friendship and Boris to try and pull the wool over our eyes that there will be no Irish sea border. "Over my Dead Body" he bellowed in this regard but how much of that is sincerity and how much telling us what we wanted to hear? Let's not forget that some of his predecessors were quite well trained in the art of pissing up one's leg to get what they wanted. In fact in his 2010 autobiography Tony Blair even admitted as much when he said "Politicians are obliged from time to time to conceal the full truth, to bend it and even history it, where the interests of the bigger strategic goal demand it be done. Without operating with some subtlety at this level, the job would be well-nigh impossible." We all know his tenure at peace talks went and the legacy he left behind via secret agreements so I'm sure many will be sceptical of Boris and his dead body claims.

The biggest issue facing many though this month is the students awaiting exam results and the infamous algorithm which has in many cases lowered scoring for predicted grades and could be argued to discriminate against working class secondary schools as the previous performances have been taken into account. The fact that a change was made following a very public outcry to make sure teachers grading was used for GCSE in contrast

to A Levels showed that politicians actually listened but for many it was too late and some life changing decisions have been altered. While the appeal process is offered some parents of children relying on top grades in prestige subjects such as Law and Medicine will miss out as their university places are more or less filled. The pressure on the students is ridiculous and hopefully a fit and proper resolution can be found.

This month some important cultural dates all took place and many smaller localised parades and events took place instead with the Apprentice Boys of Derry having a very small city focused set of parades in line with guidelines and the sound of cannon fire was met with no crowds compared to previous years when thousands travelled up the night before to enjoy the festivities and look forward to the biggest single parade in the calendar. It is heartening to see that in so many cases the appreciation of culture and heritage is there with many people coming out to their doorsteps and streets to see a single band or Loyal Order; just to catch a glimpse or show their support. Covid has hit our country hard but one thing remains and that's the loyalty

of the general public to their own people. Not just within parades but with community as well as so much was done to look after neighbours, friends and relatives during this pandemic.

The biggest concern though is the fear that a second lockdown will be imposed. As detailed in an article this month there is a real possibility that the infection rate will rise and cause further restrictions to be imposed and sink back into the dark days at the start of the pandemic.

At the time of writing the Health Minister has announced that outside gatherings can only total up to a maximum of 15 people whilst in a domestic setting a total of 6 from only 2 different households allowed.

Those who have come out of a lengthy shielding process who might have wanted to look forward to a sense of normality will now start to worry and because of this we need to do all we can to observe the guidelines and thus ensuring everyone stays safe. The message can't be any clearer; listen to the Government guidance, don't get complacent and think of the bigger picture not just yourself!



IN MEMORIUM

The officers and staff of South Belfast UPRG offer our deepest sympathies to our highly esteemed Chairman Colin Halliday on the passing of his father. We also extend our sympathies to the wider family circle. God Bless.

GLENMORE & HILDEN AREAS UNDER SIEGE

Over the past few months as the world locks down and communities come together to show support and look out for each other to fight a worldwide pandemic the Greater Low Road area of Lisburn has had another fight on their hands and that is against antisocial behaviour. While guidance has been imposed to keep large numbers from gathering together it has not seemed to have deterred these swarms of youths. Kids from the age of 12 are regularly intoxicated on drugs and drink; meeting in groups of up to 60 at a time and have been leaving a trail of destruction throughout the area.

Locals are saying how they are living in fear with properties being damaged, abuse being levelled at residents and threats and sectarian chants are also among the long list this community has had to deal with alongside the worldwide pandemic.

Community representatives, volunteers and local residents have all been on the streets in an attempt to end this torture and have been pleading with the police who receive complaints on a daily basis to actually step up and take control and end this drink and drug rampage. Most of the youths attending these gathering aren't even from the area and that is what many are finding hard

to accept as it's not their own children and families causing the problems. Some are even boasting of how they take souvenirs back to their West Belfast housing estates to show how much damage they have caused. Police are phoned, notified and emailed about the ongoing criminal acts but without arrests or a heavy police presence its left the Low Road residents angry and bemused and wondering why this is allowed to happen and why haven't the police tackled the problem and ended it.

Friday 24th July seen this mob take an even more sinister turn when the PSNI, after again receiving several complaints, finally arrived at

the drink and drug party taking place alongside the river Lagan and just ushered the crowds away. No arrests or no youths were lifted instead they were just asked to move on. The mob then made its way along the towpath and made an appearance in the Glenmore side of the area where locals had property damaged, flags ripped from lampposts then burnt and even one local resident having a flag ripped from the wall of her house and was told that she would be sexually assaulted if she made any complaints about this.. This community does not and will not accept antisocial behaviour and once again raises serious questions as to what the police are doing and why is this allowed to happen.

A very proud and united community is finding this hard to deal with and to add to worries in recent weeks evidence was found of hard drugs abuse as a used hypodermic needle was found in undergrowth near the Glenmore Activity Centre. There has been a rise in the use of hard drugs all over Lisburn in recent years and every effort must be made to fight this deadly trade. Every assistance has to be given and the authorities need the community to help them gain as much evidence as possible.



**STOP
THE PERSECUTION OF
OUR VETERANS
THEY SERVED ALL!!**

Lest we forget



Jackie McDonald

Straight talking from the heart of Loyalist South Belfast

Hume-Adams/De Chastelain-Loyalists

I was sorry to hear of the recent passing of John Hume, no doubt his efforts (along with Gerry Adams) played a significant role in what we call today, The Peace Process. I had occasion to meet with John Hume at Magee College in Londonderry a few years ago at an awards ceremony and it was obvious that his health was failing so I just said hello and didn't engage in any lengthy conversation. I couldn't help but think back to the old black and white film footage on BBC Newsreels of the early days of the Civil Rights and this powerful outspoken man at the front of the crowd challenging the Policemen who were preventing them from reaching their intended destination that day. The violence that ensued on the streets of the Maiden City that day and on so many occasions after was the makings of the Provisional IRA in their breeding ground. Republican Paramilitaries were quick to realise the value of Media coverage and soon they were orchestrating similar clashes and confrontations in Londonderry and in Belfast to embarrass the RUC and to make them look as though they were the perpetrators whilst beating innocent protesters. These confrontations and film footage of British Soldiers carrying out house searches in Nationalist areas of Londonderry and Belfast swelled the ranks of Republican Paramilitaries and gained them support, not only here in the Province, but in fact Worldwide particularly in America.

Does anyone see the similarities with what Dissident Republicans are trying to replicate today? John Hume wasn't talking

about peace then, nor was Gerry Adams, (or anyone else for that matter) The British Government wanted to defeat the IRA Militarily not by dialogue Gerry Adams, even though he wasn't a member of the IRA as he says, wanted Republicans to drive the British out of the North he has never referred to our Country as Northern Ireland. (To me the North of Ireland is Donegal). So what brought about this change of heart, why did John Hume approach Gerry Adams (we presume that's how their dialogue began) and what influence did Hume think that Adams might have with an Organisation that was bombing, maiming and murdering anyone who stood in its way? John Hume deserved all the plaudits and awards that he received he was a brave man who has helped us all to get to a better place the point I'm making is that he wasn't always the 'Peacemaker' he realised that the violence was wrong, that too many innocent lives were being lost too many innocent families suffering (as did Adams to some degree) and the 'Armed Struggle' was exactly that, a struggle, achieving nothing.

Gerry Adams would have had to be given the go-ahead to engage with John Hume from at least some of the IRA Leadership and that any meetings between them were to be kept secret it's well documented that some of the more militant Brigade areas within the IRA weren't happy when they heard what was going on behind their backs. However, it happened or however long it took to happen we have to agree and appreciate that the Hume/Adams talks helped us all to move on. There's speculation that

John Hume and John McMichael spoke about the situation as it was then but I'm not sure that any such dialogue took place. John McMichael and I were close associates in those days and I never once heard him mention John Hume or having any conversations with him. Big John; 'The Thinker' as we called him, was working on the Common Sense Document and he had many serious conversations with and took advice from several Politicians and Church Ministers at that time but I never heard him mention speaking to John Hume. Recent events have me thinking of the importance of the Loyalist Interlocutors dialogue with General John De Chastelain and his group dialogue that lasted for 8 years before any Decommissioning took place. The General and his team met with Senior Republicans too of course and there were obvious difficulties there not only with any possible agreement about decommissioning but as to how it could be seen to be done in an open and transparent way. Unionists and Loyalists would have wanted a 'Sackcloth and Ashes' surrender of weapons and of course the IRA would have had their own ideas on the 'Decommissioning Act'. They are often heard stating, even today, that an undefeated Army doesn't decommission their weapons. Fair play to John De Chastelain he, along with Father Reid and Reverend Harold Good, managed to convince all interested parties that the weapons had been put beyond use.

I saw the General on TV the day that he was to announce that the IRAs decommissioning act had taken place and I knew that there had been problems, he looked stressed out, there hadn't been the transparency that Unionists had demanded. The evidence of the 'Act' was eventually accepted thanks to the credibility of De

Chastelain, Father Reid and Harold Good. Now the General had to somehow get Loyalist Paramilitaries to do the same, no easy task I can assure you, the British Government were afraid that if the Loyalists didn't decommission they might still attack Republicans maybe even being encouraged to do so by the claim that the IRA had given up their weapons. The real danger was that if the Loyalist Paramilitaries did attack then the Republican Paramilitaries might retaliate with weapons that they weren't supposed to have so there was an urgency about getting all the weapons out of circulation. Eventually the three recognised Loyalist Paramilitary Groups did decommission their weapons and most people breathed a sigh of relief it had been a very difficult decision for Loyalists to take with Dissident Republicans still being active but they had the courage to do it for the sake of peace. I have thought about the British Governments attitude towards Loyalists since their decommissioning, it's shameful, it seems to have been a case of 'Give us your weapons and just go away'. That British attitude of 'Look after the IRA and the rest will look after itself', certainly seems to have kicked in where a certain amount of lip service once existed pre decommissioning there was very little, if any, after the event.

The point I'm trying to make is that regardless of the Hume/Adams talks the IRA 'Putting Weapons Beyond Use' it was the dialogue between John De Chastelain and the Loyalist Paramilitaries that certainly helped bring about the end of the Conflict here. Only the factions that made the Conflict what it was could end the violence here not any amount of dialogue. What recognition or appreciation has Loyalism got for the vital role it played

in bringing about this lasting peace? Yes, there are problems with Criminality, especially Drug Dealing, but is not only in Loyalist areas as criminals are criminals, they don't have religions or allegiances they are parasites not paramilitaries. Genuine Loyalists can be a positive influence in our Communities especially with

our young men and women; everyone with influence should realise how important our young people are that they need encouragement incentive and the prospect of a decent future for themselves; a future that everyone in our Communities can benefit from. There are all too many temptations out there

and very little consequence for doing wrong we need to provide opportunities for our young men and women to help them resist these temptations encourage them not to stray but to think of their future; all of our futures. The powers that be, the Agencies that can provide, need to do exactly that... Provide! Give our

young people opportunities, hope, show them that they are important and that we care about them. They can be the answer to many of our problems, or many of them might turn out to be the cause of our problems.

STAY SAFE, LISTEN TO THE ADVICE WE'RE BEING GIVEN!

HE'S BACK THE STONEYFORD POSTER BOY RETURNS

It's not often that we give coverage to convicted paedophiles but on this occasion it is worth covering one well known to our Editorial staff and his latest efforts to reinvent himself as the saviour of Loyalism.

It seems like Mark Harbinson from Stoneyford has had more comebacks than George Best and while he is better known for his nefarious activities that resulted in him serving a jail sentence for sexually molesting a 13 year old girl he has hit the headlines for Drumcree linked riots (where he fled upon the arrival of the Police), possession of an unusable firearm (where he fled upon arrival of Police) and also stealing election posters and using them on a bonfire (where he was unable to flee). The rather flattering 'Poster Boy' nickname is of course not for his looks or appearance more for his fondness of election literature. Anyway it seems he is trying to reinvent himself with a new social media campaign of recruitment and he has been very active on all sorts of Facebook Forums recently as he promotes a newly formed group calling itself the Orange Vanguard and the subsequent day of action planned for the 19th September when he plans to save Ulster from an Irish Sea Border.

Calling himself Mark Lewis he hides his photographs and uses some choice words to try and rally round the troops, using



his biting rhetoric (which on many occasions is badly spelt and full of grammatical error he doesn't seem to have an answer for addressing educational disadvantage) to denounce anyone who isn't as hard line as he is. The problem is some people seem oblivious to who he really is and when they are told do seem genuinely shocked and surprised that this individual who they might have taken at face value (so to speak) is actually a sexual predator with a dubious past. Unfortunately now everyone in the realms of social media seems to have the brains they were born with and one particular poster commented as Harbinson was exposed to say that the poor man was set up by MI5 as he was too smart for the authorities and just like Billy Wright he had to go. The levels of indoctrination this man has

done to hide his crimes must be something else or else he has Derren Brown like powers.

There are genuine concerns amongst the Loyalist community about the future here Post-Brexit and this must be addressed by our mainstream politicians but having someone like Harbinson try and claim the moral high ground is rather embarrassing to Loyalism. Even more insulting in recent weeks was a video filmed at Belfast City Hall where veterans stood to protect the monuments during the BLM movements high profile campaign of rewriting history. There standing proud as punch with his UDR beret on was the Stoneyford Messiah himself.

The Orange Vanguard group haven't officially announced any sort of beginning and they only seem to exist on the pages of social media forums but Mr Mark Lewis AKA Harbinson has

got a few flags made up with the new logo on it ready to put up all over Ulster and boost his massive ego. The day of action has apparently come about after a series of meetings all over the country which he claimed was so successful that they have held more and more to allow everyone the chance to hear the 'Poster Boys' voice. The truth is that a very sad and twisted individual is living the last throw of the dice as far as loyalism is concerned. Time and again he has shown to be a man living on fantasy and dreams and one who has virtually no support bar one or two people who have been brain washed into thinking the security services are out to get him. The paranoia is no doubt fuelled by his ego but think back to the start of his band of merry men which he christened the Orange Volunteers in 2001. He got a few young and impressionable lads from the greater Glenavy/Crumlin area to jump into an Orange parade with him where they all wore matching homemade collarettes and polo shirts (pictures available in Rev Brian Kennaways book on the Orange Order entitled A Tradition Betrayed) then after subsequent attacks and activity many of them were left languishing in prison with future careers all destroyed. At this same time Loyalists in Lisburn had begun a process of educating their own community and making people proud of their community and identity by working to better it instead of getting incarcerated for random sectarian attacks.

Has Harbinson ever thought about his victims, not just the young lady he sexually molested and groomed but the others he left with reputations in tatters; young men who looked up to him as a leader and role model?

This man doesn't deserve airtime or publicity but the truth has to be told.

SOUTH BELFAST UPRG EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER INCREASED COVID-19 RISK - CALLS FOR PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO ADVICE

As we go to press the Northern Ireland Health Minister Robin Swann has warned of a new outbreak of infections and has called for people to heed the advice of health professionals. He stated that we "have to step in now" to deal with any further outbreak. Northern Ireland's rate currently showed (as of 19th August 2020) 24 cases per 100,000 over the past 14 days, evidence that pointed to the virus spreading again, he added. There had been a tenfold increase in new infections since the beginning of July, he said, with almost 300 new cases being confirmed in Northern Ireland in the past week.

It comes as 34 new cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in Northern Ireland in the past 24 hours, according to Department of Health figures.

There have been no further deaths linked to it in the same period.

Meanwhile, the Republic of Ireland's Department of Health recorded two deaths from the virus and an additional 54 cases. There has now been a total of 1,775 Covid-19 related deaths in the country and 27,547 cases.

South Belfast UPRG has urged all constituents to practice health precautions and to listen to what advice is being offered. We cannot blame Stormont if the Covid-19 virus continues to spread whilst so many people become far too relaxed about the situation even when (and despite of) the threat of health repercussions and even a new possible general lockdown for us all. Those who have jeopardised the health of the country (and that clearly includes Sinn Fein and their supporters - lockdowns are not an excuse to travel the country to a funeral) must have a serious look at themselves and (better still) explain themselves to the general public. These are serious times!

Recommendations will be made to the Stormont Executive by the Health Minister and it would be wise for all people to adhere to them in order to bring down the level of infection (currently being estimated at between 1.6 to 2.0) and allow the country to get back to a sense of normality. We would endorse any advice and practical help that will ensure the health and safety of our constituents.



IN MEMORIAM

Vol Marty Gibson 'D' Coy

Died 17th August 2020

Proudly remembered by his friends and comrades

'D' Battalion South Belfast Brigade

Ulster Defence Association

Quis Separabit

Ballynahinch UPRG and Ballynahinch 'D' Coy

would like to express our deep sadness at the death of our friend and comrade Marty Gibson, who died on the 17th of August 2020.

Highly regarded and well thought of, he will be missed.

Quis Separabit

Vol Giles Carey 'B' Coy

Died 25th August 1995

Proudly remembered by his friends and comrades 'D'

Battalion South Belfast Brigade

Ulster Defence Association

Quis Separabit

Vol Chris Jardine, 'A' Coy

Died 17th August 2003

Proudly remembered by his friends and comrades

'D' Battalion South Belfast Brigade

Ulster Defence Association

Quis Separabit

Vol Robert Orr, 'D' Coy

Died 25th August 2012

Proudly remembered by his friends and comrades

'D' Battalion South Belfast Brigade

Ulster Defence Association

Quis Separabit

Vol Terry Martin, 'D' Coy

Died 22nd August 2014

Proudly remembered by his friends and comrades

'D' Battalion South Belfast Brigade

Ulster Defence Association

Quis Separabit

JUST A THOUGHT

CAMARADERIE

During the COVID-19 pandemic there were many challenges for Loyalists who as usual stepped up to the mark and delivered on their commitment to look after their community and mobilise when needed. While it was a different battle it was none the less important to gather together and react to the threat of isolation and poverty inflicted by the lockdown. The communications network set in place and the number of different units set up to plan actions was incredible. There was a sense of camaraderie that can sometimes be overlooked but that is of vital importance to any response. The planning of actions, the messages that were relayed, the volunteers who met up for tasks assigned to them based upon their strengths, the procurement of supplies needed to wage such a response, all couldn't have taken place without dedication, structure and of course the Gallows Humour of those certain individuals who keep spirits high in adversity. Loyalists should be proud of their role in the greatest threat to humanity since World War II and of how they used their skills that have been developed throughout a period of conflict.

In contrast to this camaraderie was the robotic idealism of the Pan Nationalist Front and

especially Republicanism. "Never let a good crisis go to waste". The nonsense spurred about Brexit, Trade Borders and of course Unification continued to be reeled off as per their instructions. Absent was the focus on the response to the pandemic and what could be set in place to respond to and also support the recovery of COVID-19. However, we should not be surprised at this reaction as the modus operandi of this cult is to try and shock the Unionist establishment that they believe controls their lives and creates the ideology for their warped sense of nationalism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Loyalists are not shocked by anything this cult can stoop to, the funeral was no surprise

and even the sneaking about of Francis, the threat of violence following any Brexit agreement, the escapades in local councils and of course the contempt for a United Kingdom funded Executive and its Ministers in unprecedented times, specifically "the shire of bastards" comment. Not to mention the hypocrisy of Bobby going to England while his comrades would not welcome British military healthcare.

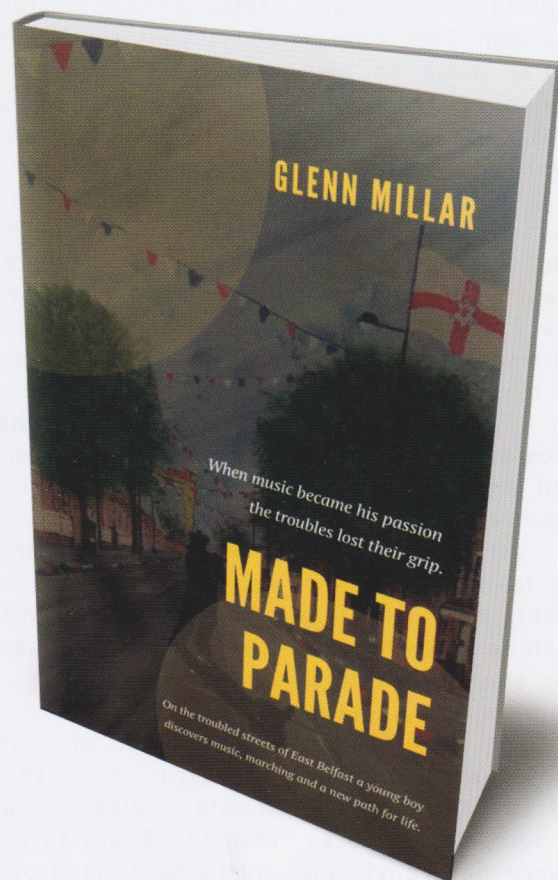
So, while the PNF continues on their ideological sleepwalk, Loyalists can be proud of their part played during the crisis. Activists and local units should record the part they played during the most testing time of a generation and be proud. Republicans will have a more difficult job of doing so.

MADE TO PARADE

Made to Parade is the debut book by Glenn Millar a Belfast community worker and bandsman. Glenn has been involved with the band scene for over 35 years having been a member of Pride of the Raven and Ballymacarrett Defenders.

Glenn wanted to provide a positive personal account of his experience as a member of a marching band, recognising that the inside story from a band members perspective had never really been told before. Having drawn up some draft chapters and positive feedback from local author Tony McAuley, Glenn set about writing his story.

Made to Parade is set in 1984/85 when Glenn first joined Pride of the Raven, growing up on an interface in East Belfast, joining a band helped him discover a passion for music, and when music became his passion the troubles lost their grip on his life, there was something else to live for and in the flute he found a friend that would never let him down.



Made to Parade is available online via Amazon in paperback and Ebook versions. Paperback costs £10.00 and Ebooks £9.99. If you would like to host a chapter reading contact Glenn via email. glennmillar@mac.com



South Belfast UPRG NEWS UPDATE

Working for the future of South Belfast and beyond

A revised document entitled "Guidance on decision-making for the Victims' Payments Scheme" has been issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the 14th August 2020. South Belfast UPRG had previously submitted a detailed critique to the first proposal document which generated a mostly positive response from all sections of society. Our conclusions were summarised thus;

"Anyone who planted a bomb, shot and attacked security services or members of the public and who (in that process of committing those acts) were injured cannot claim to be a victim. This is clear in a moral sense and we would submit it to be clear in a legal sense. All delays in delivering pensions to victims is a further insult to them and adds to their suffering."

Sinn Féin claimed that somehow the proposals would prevent "innocent" victims from receiving a pension. The examples they provided included a convicted felon who was subsequently injured in another attack, an ex-prisoner (convicted of IRA membership and part of a three man bomb team) who was then shot by a soldier in an unrelated matter and relatives of a bomber who somehow wanted to profit from their uncles sordid sectarian attacks. These were not convincing arguments!

The new revised guidance attempts to frame things in a clearer light. Some further details can be gleaned by closely examining the key

parts of the document. For example:

"Guiding principles for decision-making:

5. This guidance is designed to support the Board and President in exercising their discretion to decide that entitlement to victims' payments is inappropriate (a "relevant decision").

6. Given the passage of time since the Troubles, Northern Ireland's contested history and other peace-building measures, the serious nature of relevant offences being considered, and the potential for mitigating factors and circumstances to be relevant, the Regulations provide that the Board will make a case by case determination. In deciding whether entitlement is inappropriate the test to be applied is: whether the seriousness of the relevant conviction is outweighed by mitigating circumstances and relevant factors. The Board should take as its starting point that where the applicant has a conviction in respect of conduct which caused serious physical or psychological injury to another person, such a conviction would ordinarily make victims' payments inappropriate.

7. Evidence of continuing disregard for the law should also ordinarily lead the Board to consider entitlement inappropriate.

8. The Board and President may, even having considered mitigating circumstances and evidence of positive behaviour, still consider

that the nature of the relevant conviction or the exceptional circumstances are such that entitlement to victims' payments is inappropriate.

9. In reaching decisions the Board and President must have due regard to the stated purpose of the scheme: to provide those living with permanent disablement caused by injury through no fault of their own in a Troubles-related incident with payments primarily in acknowledgment of the acute harm which they have suffered".

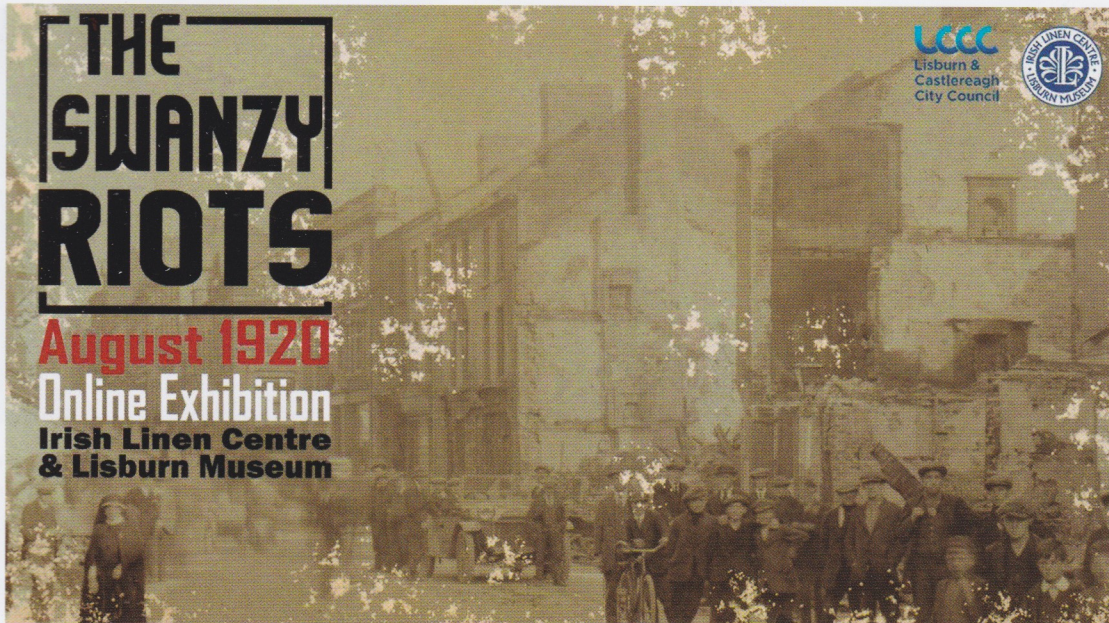
Section 9 is the most relevant part and it is here that the Secretary of State confirms and reasserts our belief that a pension should only be granted to

"provide those living with permanent disablement caused by injury through no fault of their own in a Troubles-related incident with payments primarily in acknowledgment of the acute harm which they have suffered". This is the heart of the matter and one which may well cause Sinn Féin consternation but is a fundamental requirement for this scheme to work. A pension should be delivered to genuine applicants who have suffered grievous loss or harm and who fulfil the basic requirement of being a victim. No wriggling or manufacturing of evidence or historical revisionism that Sinn Féin care to put forward will alter the essential truth of what constitutes a victim and we would implore the Secretary of State to stand firm on this.

Is there a "get out" clause for Sinn Féin or a way in which they can circumvent the above criteria? The devil is always in the detail, but we can find no specific loophole for which Sinn Féin can 'test out' this particular scheme other than going through the courts in a long-protracted battle. They will obviously attempt to do just that as well as continuing to dither and delay in agreeing to this proposal. It is by this very tactic (delaying and threatening to hold up everything and agree on nothing) that Sinn Féin reveal themselves to be (and this is hardly a surprise to most of us) anti-democratic and devoid of any compassion for victims. Genuine victims. Real victims.

There will no doubt be further twists and turns (even amendments?) as the days become weeks, and the weeks become months and victims are deprived of what is rightfully theirs. Yet our position remains the same as before. We stated it clearly then and we state it clearly now:

"In conclusion we support a pension scheme for victims and accept that the definitions and application criteria for the scheme is fair and proportionate. We would vigorously encourage all political parties to reach rapid agreement and move this scheme forward. We would also urge the United Kingdom government to roll out this scheme without delay and reject the constant delaying tactics of Sinn Féin, who remain a barrier to a resolution of this matter".



THE SWANZY RIOTS

August 1920
Online Exhibition
Irish Linen Centre
& Lisburn Museum

Introduction

This exhibition explores one of the most difficult episodes in Lisburn's recent past: the Swanzy Riots of August 1920. The assassination of R.I.C. District Inspector Swanzy on a quiet, sunny Sunday in Lisburn led to days of vicious looting and rioting, forcing many of the town's Catholics to flee. While a significant, but not well known, event in Lisburn's rich history, the Riots are part of the wider story of the War of Independence (1919-1922) on the island of Ireland.

This exhibition features, for the first time, a database of 300+ compensation claims relating to the Riots, and an interactive map developed in conjunction with local historians, Pearse Lawlor and Pat Geary, and Charlie Roche (University College Cork/Atlas of the Irish Revolution).

A list of acknowledgements and suggestions for further reading can be found at the end of the exhibition.

Life in Lisburn, 1920

On the eve of the riots, what was life like in Lisburn?

Lisburn was a busy, industrial town famous for its connection to the linen industry. In 1920 the community was still reeling from the Great War (1914-18), in which almost 1000 local men and women had lost their lives. For those who returned home, life

was hard and job prospects were limited.

Lisburn Urban District Council (L.U.D.C.) was responsible for the town's amenities and services, and just over 12,000 people lived within its boundaries. Law and order was upheld by the Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.), with barracks on Railway Street, Smithfield and Hillhall.

Local politics were firmly unionist, although the electorate had been scandalised in January 1920 with the election of the first Sinn Féin councillor to Lisburn Urban District Council (L.U.D.C.), William Shaw. Community relations were good, although tensions were easily roused at times of political conflict.

The Irish War of Independence

On 21 January 1919, the First Dáil met in Dublin and declared Irish independence. On the same day, the opening shots of the Irish War of Independence (1919-21) were fired in Tipperary, claiming the lives of two R.I.C. constables. The War was fought on several fronts. Soldiers and police were refused carriage on trains or service in shops, and independent Dáil Courts were established to undermine the state. The R.I.C. were frequent targets in an increasingly bloody guerrilla war waged by the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.). Across the country, barracks were

raided and many 'Old R.I.C.' men resigned. Police ranks were bolstered in early 1920 with almost 10,000 ex-soldiers, the 'Black and Tans', followed by a special counter-insurgency force, the Auxiliary Division.

County Cork was the most violent county in Ireland during the war of independence and Cork City, the county town, saw much of this action. In January 1920 Tomas MacCurtain (1884-1920) was elected the first Sinn Féin Lord Mayor of the city. A prominent local businessman, MacCurtain was head of the No. 1 Brigade of the Cork I.R.A. He was known as a moderate and often clashed with more violent elements within the Brigade.

Murder, Murder, Murder!

On 20 March 1920 Tomas MacCurtain was murdered at his home in front of his wife and children by unknown members of the R.I.C. in Cork. His death was a reprisal for the increased targeting of police in the city. Indeed, on the night MacCurtain was murdered R.I.C. Constable Murtagh had been shot dead by the Cork I.R.A.

The public was outraged by MacCurtain's murder and over 20,000 people attended the funeral, which was one of the largest Cork City had ever seen. An inquest was quickly set up to investigate the circumstances of the Lord Mayor's death. Over

fifteen days an inquest jury sat in City Hall and heard sensational testimony that damned the local Police. Eyewitnesses placed men from King's Street R.I.C. barracks, Cork City, in the vicinity of the murder, and the discovery of spent police cartridges and R.I.C. button at the scene points to a Constabulary rifle having fired the fatal shot. R.I.C. District Inspector Oswald Ross Swanzy was responsible for the North District of the city where the murder took place, and witnesses claim to have seen a man fitting his description talking to the murder gang shortly before the assassination. The jury heard that in the days that followed the murder, the R.I.C. made little effort to investigate the crime.

The Inquest

On 17 April 1920, the jury returned their verdict, finding that:

Alderman Tomas MacCurtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, died from shock and haemorrhage, caused by bullet wounds, and that he was wilfully wounded under circumstances of the most callous brutality; and that the murder was organised and carried out by the RIC officially directed by the British Government.

They famously returned a verdict of:

wilful murder against David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England; Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Ian MacPherson, late Chief Secretary of Ireland; acting-Inspector General Smith, of the RIC; Divisional Inspector Clayton of the RIC; D.I. Swanzy, and some unknown members of the RIC.

After the inquest, the men suspected of involvement were under threat. In May 1920 R.I.C. Constables Harrington and Garvey, who were believed to have fired the fatal shots, were gunned down by the Cork I.R.A., and King's Street Barracks was destroyed. By mid-June 1920 D.I. Swanzy was in Lisburn, having been transferred for his own safety.

22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE OMAGH BOMB

As the 22nd anniversary of the Omagh Bomb comes and goes, when will justice finally prevail? The biggest atrocity in Northern Ireland's history, and still the culprits walk free and the families suffering continues.

August 15th 1998, a date that will forever be remembered for all the wrong reasons. The Omagh bombing killed 29 people (including a woman pregnant with twins) and injured 220 others, making it the deadliest single incident of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Telephoned warnings had been sent almost 40 minutes beforehand but were inaccurate, and police had inadvertently moved people toward the bomb. A disgusting ploy clearly devised by evil to murder and maim

innocent men, women and children. The large explosive device had been driven into Omagh Town centre and left in a Red Vauxhall Astra by dissident Republicans, an area that would cause maximum damage in a busy shopping street. It is believed that intelligence had been received by British, Irish and US agencies that could have prevented the bombing, but the information was not turned over to the RUC at that time. People from many different backgrounds were killed including Protestants, Catholics and Spanish tourists. 6 teenagers were killed along with 6 children, one a baby of 20 months.

Disturbingly, many investigations took place, leading to arrests and



convictions, only for the convictions to be overturned.

But why?

There are many Questions left unanswered.

Why was the car containing the bomb allowed to travel across the border into Omagh? MI5 had received intelligence regarding the car colour and model. It is believed the car was let through to protect an undercover agent who had recently stolen it for that particular job. Who made this decision? and why are they not held accountable for this grievous error of

judgement? Surely the reason for an undercover agent is to help avoid these attacks. It certainly feels like the truth has been buried to save those who held power at that time, also allowing despicable Republican criminals to walk away scot free.

A bumbling calamity of errors? Or a calculated misleading of justice?

We deserve to know!

The families from both sides deserve the truth!

Money cannot buy the closure needed. Our thoughts are still with all involved and may justice be served in the sleepless nights of those responsible.

Unfortunately lies and misdirection is not uncommon when mistakes are made. Too many times have the lines been blurred because the wrong person is found to have blood on their hands. Is it any wonder the hatred runs deep in many loyalist strongholds? Unfortunately terrorists have been infiltrating government positions from the 80's right up to the present day. Political puppets masquerading as wannabe leaders, reading the script of dissident Republicans.

Always a hidden agenda.

We see what you are and your political mask hides nothing but your own shame.

#JusticeforOmagh



@theloyalistQS

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Write to loyalpublications@yahoo.co.uk

Dear Editor,

The current infection rate (Covid-19) here in Northern Ireland has recently been raised to between 1.6 and 2.0, an extremely worrying increase from what was thought to be an under-control infection rate of 0.6. How has this happened?

When the Bobby Storey funeral debacle took place everyone concentrated on the lack of social distancing and the outrageous takeover of the city crematorium. Multiple official enquiries are now underway to apportion blame and to find out exactly how Sinn Fein and their supporters broke multiple rules and restrictions despite assurances that the funeral would be a "low key" event. But the knock-on effect and repercussions of their illegality and disdain for the rule of law now manifests itself as a public

health hazard.

It has now been revealed that people travelled from all parts of Northern Ireland to attend this mock funeral and that they were bussed in from many rural areas as well. No precautions were taken, and we can see in videos that social distancing was not maintained, in fact people were encouraged to mingle and to bulk up the crowds to show "support" for the deceased Mr Storey. I know of three separate coaches (all full to capacity) that travelled from Castlewellsan and Newcastle all the way down to Belfast to attend the funeral and subsequently travelled back (stopping on the way for refreshments) to their home towns. Both Newcastle and Castlewellsan now report multiple cases of Covid-19 and the town of Newcastle is under virtual lockdown. This has been caused solely by infected Sinn

Fein supporters who failed to carry out appropriate health advice and who have now caused untold damage to rural areas. Newcastle (a popular seaside resort) is a virtual ghost town now. Castlewellsan has had to shut popular shops and eateries. Health officials are extremely concerned for the elderly as infection rates soar.

One particularly cheeky Sinn Fein councillor attempted to blame tourists for the sudden outbreak but health officials have traced this new infection back to the Storey funeral, as other clusters have now been reported in Tyrone (also sent coaches to the funeral) and West Belfast. There has been no apology from Sinn Fein and health officials are now floundering to contain the infection rate.

The whole episode demonstrates (to me anyway) Sinn Fein's complete disregard for anything

other than their own selfish needs. From fake funerals to infecting the countryside to denying victims of IRA violence a pension we can see Sinn Fein for exactly what they are - and it is ugly and self-serving and devoid of a moral sensibility. They are a constant threat to the public health and a political party that shames what passes for democracy in this country. Covid-19 has truly shown the true colours of some people and some political parties and Sinn Fein have failed themselves, failed the public and are ultimately responsible for the serious situation we now find ourselves in.

Yours sincerely,

County Down Observer
Name and Address supplied

OMAGH BOMB 22 YEARS ON

Four months after the Good Friday Agreement was signed on the 10th April 1998, a 500lb bomb exploded in the market town of Omagh claiming the lives of 29 civilians and injuring 300 more, forever scarring the town with the atrocity and the single biggest death toll of the troubles.

August 15th, 2020 sees the 22nd anniversary of the atrocity with still no one having been convicted in a criminal court. In 2014 a civil action was brought against Seamus Daly a 43year old man from Culloville, County Monaghan who faced 33 charges. Daly also faced a charge of a bomb attempt in Lisburn in the same year as the Omagh bomb.

In 2014, The families of the victims filed a civil case against 5

men, including Daly. Four of the 5 men were ordered to pay £1.5m in damages (Not a penny of which has been received by the victim's families to date). Whilst all lives matter, the saddest victims of the atrocity must be the unborn twins who never grew to see the relative peace that the Good Friday Agreement has brought to the country. They would have been 22 this year, who knows what their lives would have had in store for them.

The number of fatalities could have been reduced if the caller had provided the correct location of the bomb. Three calls were made, one to the Samaritans and two were made to the UTV newsroom.

"There's a bomb, courthouse,

Omagh, main street, 500lb, explosion, 30 minutes" with the Real IRA codeword: Martha Pope. This caused a problem as there is no street named Main Street in Omagh and the only target that was named was the Courthouse situated to the west of the town, the car bomb had been planted in the east of the town on Market Street.

The Police could never have known that they were shepherding unsuspecting souls to their death but have no doubt that it was the Real IRA's intention to create as much devastation as possible and a deliberate act of misinformation of the location of the bomb was sure to create this. This was viewed as an attack on the commercial assets of Omagh by the Real IRA and not on the people, they in turn blamed the Police for failing to respond to



clear warnings. The attack was condemned all around the world. Whilst the Historical Enquiry Team pursue those soldiers who took lives in the line of duty and look to prosecute them in the highest courts, it seems that those who set out to cause blatant murder and destruction can escape prosecution, who knows they maybe have a letter from government that exempts them from prosecution?

We will never let the atrocities of the IRA be swept under the carpet and those who represent us in government should be pursuing prosecution at every available opportunity.

APPRENTICE BOYS OF DERRY 2020

The year 2020 will be synonymous with the Covid pandemic and with it all the lockdown measures, restrictions, guidelines and the life changes many have made.

The Loyal Orders and marching band fraternity are two bodies which have been hit hard by this and while we are used to large scale events over the summer months (commonly referred to as the Marching Season) it has been heartening to see such great effort put into holding smaller localised events and parades to make sure the general public can enjoy their culture and heritage. The success that was the Twelfth encouraged local Apprentice Boys clubs all over Northern Ireland do similar events such as parades and wreath laying ceremonies in memory of the bravery of 13 Young Apprentice who locked shut the gates of the Maiden City.

Within the city of Lisburn all the local clubs did their own events with parades being held in Ballymacash for their own Campsie Club and the No Surrender Hillsborough Branch walking in Lisburn before hosting an outdoors socially distanced BBQ. The Lisburn and Broomhedge clubs didn't parade but laid wreaths and then held small functions to mark the day which is annually held to celebrate the breaking of the Lough Foyle boom and the effective ending of the siege of the city.

